

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Alexis Mackbach and I am a resident of Stratford, Connecticut and a student at The University of Connecticut. I am from an immigrant family from Cuba.

I stand in support of S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 18 regardless of immigration status is an important step in ensuring our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we need. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

I was born and raised in Connecticut, with a father who was also born and raised in Connecticut, and a mother who was born and raised in New York City. My mother's parents immigrated to New York from Cuba in the 1950s.

My immediate family now : Father, mother, sister, brother, grandmother and myself are all currently on Husky state insurance. Both my father and mother have struggled with losing their jobs and subsequently not being able to afford Cobra health insurance for themselves, or our family. When I turned 18 I became responsible for my own insurance; because I am a citizen, I was luckily able to be eligible for Husky insurance along with the rest of my family, including my grandmother who went through the immigration process and became a U.S. citizen in the 1970s.

However, my father's health insurance is due to end in April and I have overheard my parents discussing their concern about this because my father is on multiple different medications. My concern is that health insurance like Husky is difficult to maintain for people even natively born in America, so is subsequently, undoubtedly more difficult for immigrants.

We as members of the Connecticut community should want to foster unity and growth. This includes recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. If we want healthy children, we need healthy parents, and healthy families. We must work toward ensuring that undocumented immigrants of all ages can access health care. Currently, we're leaving undocumented parents, and adults behind. Children do better when their parents do better, and families do better with community support. It has been proven that when parents and caregivers have access to health care, their children are more likely to be insured and to use and receive care.

We as members of the Connecticut community should want better for ourselves, and all of the people living in our community which includes members that are undocumented. We should want better, and want to ensure a healthier community. Many immigrants come to America looking for a better way. They should not be penalized by not being offered health care when all they are striving for is a better way of life for their families, as most people do.

I support S.B. 284 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,
Alexis Mackbach